

THE
DEFENDERS

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

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THE DEFENDERS

NO!
HULK CAN'T
FIGHT GAS!

WE HAVEN'T
A CHANCE!
CAN'T GET PAST
THESE CHOKING
FUMES!

WE'RE FACING OUR
MOST INCREDIBLE FOE...
AND HE MAY
DESTROY
US ALL!

TRAPPED--IN THE FRIGHT FILLED
THEATRE OF FEAR!

STAN LEE
PRESENTS: THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS!

GOLD DIGGERS OF FEAR

ONLY RARELY IS THERE A LULL IN THE NOISE-LEVEL OF A NEW YORK CITY STREET... A TIME WHEN ONE MAY ACTUALLY HEAR ONESELF THINK ABOVE THE JACK-HAMMERS, AUTO-HORNS AND THE MANIFESTED PRESENCE OF OVER ELEVEN MILLION PEOPLE CRAMMED INTO MUCH TOO SMALL AN AREA.

STILL... THERE ARE SUCH MOMENTS... AND IT IS DURING ONE SUCH TIME THAT DR. STRANGE, MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS, WALKS THE STREETS OF GREENWICH VILLAGE, LOST IN QUIET MEDITATION...



BILL MANTLO / SAM GRAINGER / JACK ABEL / KAREN MANTLO LETTERING / MARV WOLFMAN
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CLEA WISHED TO BE
ALONE THIS AFTERNOON
THAT SHE MIGHT FURTHER
HER STUDIES IN
SOLITUDE --

-- AND I DID
NOT PROTEST, WISH-
ING TO WALK THE
QUIET OF THE CITY'S
STREETS BY MYSELF.

PARDON ME! I
WASN'T PAYING
ATTENTION!

ALLOW ME TO
APOLOGIZE! NOW
WHAT WAS IT YOU
WANTED?

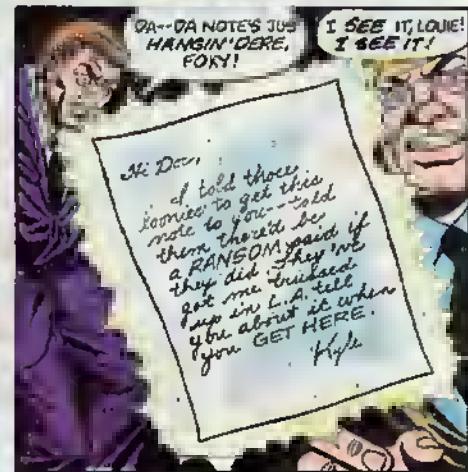
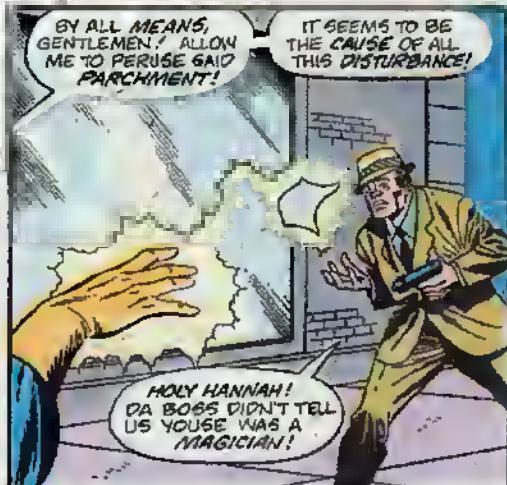
HOLD IT
RIGHT THERE,
FANCY-PANTS!

THIS HEATER'S
LOADED! ONE FUNNY
MOVE AN' I'LL
DRILL YA!

YOU SOME
KINDA WISE GUY
OR SUMPIN'?

DIG GUN IS FOR
REAL, JOKER--AN'
I DON'T MIND HAVING
TA USE IT!





AND ALL THAT
REMAINS IS TO DISPOSE
OF THESE TROUBLESOE
'GENTLEMEN'!"

THIS WAY,
GENTLEMEN!
WE'LL BE BUT
MOMENT!

'MEMBER WHAT
I SAID, DOC!
NO TRICKS!"

BUT OF COURSE,
SIR! WRONG...

-- SHOW OUR
FRIENDS
HERE TO THE
PARLOR.
WHILE I GO
TO THE SAFE
IN MY
STUDY!

ER-- AS
YOU WISH,
MASTER!

I WILL TAKE
EXCEPTIONAL CARE
OF OUR "GUESTS"!"

I KNEW
YOU WOULD,
FAITHFUL
ONE!

HEY! HOW DO WE
KNOW YOU AINT GONNA
CALL THE COPS?

ARE YOU NOT
HOLDING RICHMOND
KYLE?

YEAH!
(COURSE WE
ARE!)

DOES IT SEEM
LIKELY THAT I WOULD
PLACE HIM IN JEOPARDY!

NO, I GUESS DAT'S RIGHT! YOU WOULDN'T
OKAY-- YOUSE CAN GO GET THE DOUGH!"

"THANK
YOU, MY
FRIEND!
I'LL BE
BUT A FEW
MOMENTS!"

DR. STRANGE
OPENS THE
DOORS THAT
LEAD TO HIS
STUDY ...

... BUT THE STUDY OF A SORCERER
SUPREME IS A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT
FROM THE STUDY OF ANY OTHER HUMAN
BEING... AND, A QUICK SPELL LATER...

I SEE YOU GOT MY
MESSAGE, DOC! DID
THOSE GOONS GIVE YOU
ANY TROUBLE?

NONE. WHATSOEVER,
NIGHTHAWK! NOW, WHAT
DO WE DO TO RELEASE
YOU FROM YOUR
PRESENT STATE OF
CAPTIVITY?

WELL, DOC, I GUESS YOU'LL
HAVE TO COME TO THE
COAST!"

SEEMS THAT PENNYSWORTH BOUGHT UP AN OLD MOVIE LOT WHILE HE WAS STILL WORKING FOR KYLE RICHMOND! WHEN I WENT OUT TO OVERSEE MY INVESTMENT--

-- IT TURNED OUT THAT THE WHOLE PLACE WAS CRAWLING WITH MAGGIA HOODS!! THEY FIGURED I WAS WORTH MILLIONS AND THEY PLAN TO COLLECT!

THAT IS ENOUGH, NIGHTHAWK! I HAVE MANAGED TO MENTALLY PIN POINT YOUR LOCATION!

WE SHALL BE THERE WITHIN THE HOUR!

* THE MAGGIA HAS APPEARED MORE TIMES THAN YOU CAN SHAKE A BLACKJACK AT, MARVELITES-- AND IT WOULD TAKE THIS WHOLE PANEL TO RE-COUNT EXACTLY WHERE.--MARY.

"WE" BEING...

...THE VALKYRIE...

WHO--? OH, IT IS YOU, STEPHEN!

BORGINE ME IF I DISTURBED YOU, VAL! BUT WE ARE NEEDED!

OF COURSE, STEPHEN! I WILL BE RIGHT DOWNSTAIRS!

... AND THE INCREDIBLE HULK!

SOMETHING APPEARS IN FRONT OF HULK--

-- IT IS HULK'S FRIEND--THE MAGICIAN!

YES, HULK! NIGHTHAWK HAS NEED OF US! WILL YOU COME?

IF MAGICIAN SAYS BIRD-NOSE NEEDS HULK--

-- THEN HULK WILL COME!

IT IS DONE, VAL! THE HULK WILL FOLLOW MY ASTRAL IMAGE TO THE STUDIO OUTSIDE OF LOS ANGELES!

BUT WHAT OF THOSE WHO FOLLOWED YOU, STEPHEN! ARE THEY NOT STILL IN THE PARLOR?



THEN LEAP ON TOWARDS THAT CITY IN THE DISTANCE, HULK--ACROSS THE DESERT! VALKYRIE AND I WILL JOIN YOU THERE!







"VAL IS RIGHT, HULK! LET US OBSERVE THRU THIS WINDOW BEFORE WE ACT!"
AND WHAT THE DEFENDERS SEE IS...



-- OR THAT DOCTOR-FRIEND OF YOURS IS QUITE DEAD!



OF COURSE NOT!



-- AND SO
EFFICIENT?

NO WITNESSES, NO PROBLEMS,
AND NO TROUBLE RETURNING YOU
AFTER THE RANSOM HAS BEEN
COLLECTED!

WHY SHOULD
I--



-- PLACE
MYSELF
IN
JEOPARDY-

-- WHEN
MURDER IS
SO CLEAN--

BUT YOU STILL HAVE A
FEW MORE HOURS, MR.
RICHMOND! I SUGGEST
YOU MAKE THEM EASIER
ON YOURSELF BY
SHOOTING UP!

I GET
YOUR POINT,
FELLA! I WON'T
SAY A
WORD!

YOU'RE A GOOD
BOY, RICHMOND!
ISN'T HE, HODGES?

HODGES IS
LIKE A FATHER
TO ME, RICHMOND!
HE'S TAKEN CARE
OF ME EVER SINCE
MY PARENTS DIED
TWENTY YEARS
AGO--

YESSIR!
ANYTHING YOU
SAY TOMMY!

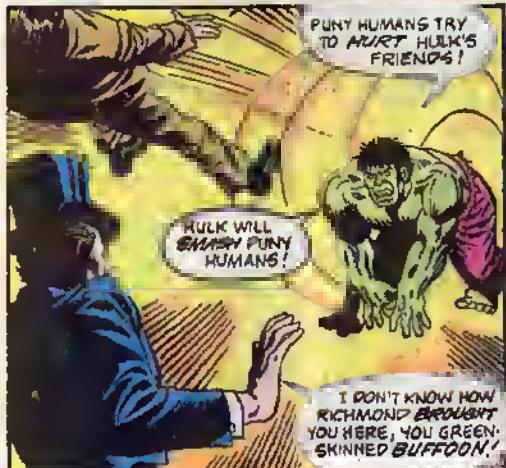
I DON'T MEAN TO BE
FREUDIAN, MY FRIEND!
BUT A MAN CAN TAKE JUST
SO MUCH. MY PARENTS
WERE CAUGHT WHEN
THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
POLICE BUSTED INTO
THEIR DISTILLERY ON
THIS LOT DURING
PROHIBITION! I WAS
FIVE YEARS OLD
THEN--

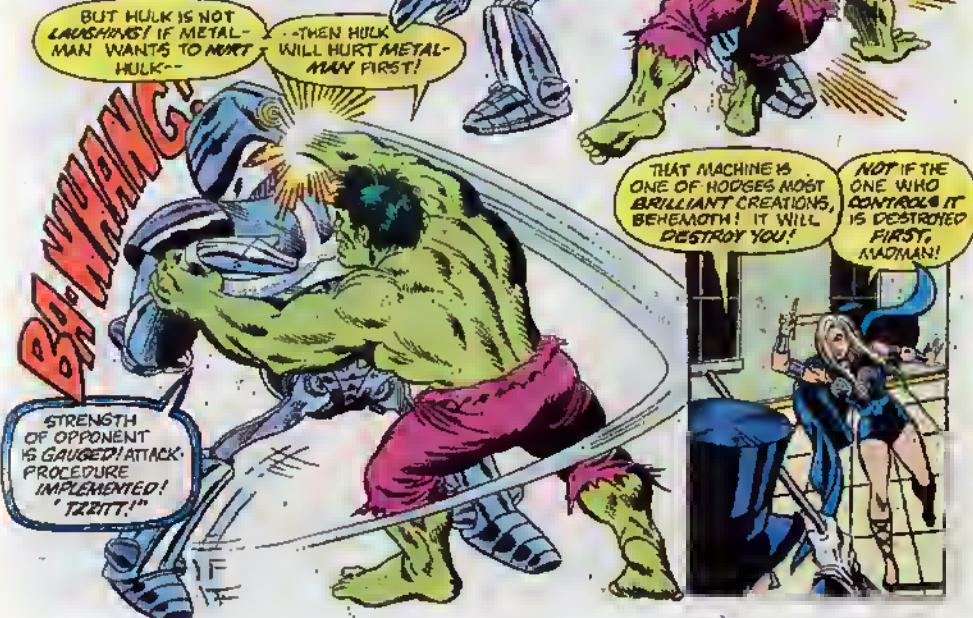
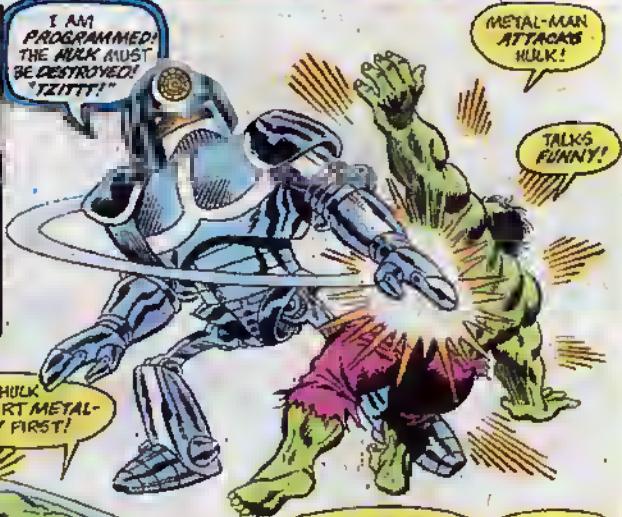
-- AND I MANAGED
TO SCRAPE BY, AS
AN EXTRA, THANKS
TO HODGES, WHILE
MY FOLKS ROTTED
IN JAIL. FINALLY I
GOT A JOB IN MUSIC-
ALS! BUT THEY WENT
BUSTED TOO!

--IN PRISON!

AND THE FINAL
STRAW WAS YOU
BUYING THIS STUDIO
AND PLANNING TO
TURN IT INTO A
HOUSING PROJECT!
I SWORE I'D GET
YOU, RICHMOND!

I SWORE
IT!





THAT MACHINE IS
ONE OF HODGES MOST
BRILLIANT CREATIONS,
BEHEMOTH! IT WILL
DESTROY YOU!

NOT IF THE
ONE WHO
CONTROLS IT
IS DESTROYED
FIRST,
KADMAN!

STRENGTH
OF OPPONENT
IS GAUGED! ATTACK
PROCEDURE
IMPLEMENTED!
'TZITT.'

MAD? OH NO,
MADAM! NOT
MAD!

--THRUST!

HOW CAN ONE
WHO HAS PLANNED
FOR ANY EVENTU-
ALITY BE CON-
SIDERED
MAD?

PARDON?

ALL OF HODGES'
TOYS CAN BE USED AS
MERE MOVIE-PROPS--OR
AS DEADLY ENGINES OF
DESTRUCTION

--ALL AT MY COMMAND!

NOW
EXCUSE ME
FOR A
MOMENT
WHILE I
ALLOW YOU
TO RECOVER
YOUR
WEAPON.

MEANWHILE...

MACHINE-
MAN MAKES
HULK
ANGRY!

HULK DOES
NOT LIKE
TO GET ANGRY
MAKES HULK
SMASH!

GOOD, HULK! YOU
HAVE BEATEN THE
ROBOT!

BUT
NIGHTHAWK IS
STILL BOUND!

AN
ELDRITCH
BOLT WILL
ALTER THAT,
HOWEVER!

THANKS, DOC! I WAS
BEGINNING TO FEEL LIKE
YOU THREE WANTED TO HOG THE
WHOLE SHOW FOR YOURSELVES.

YOU ARE
MORE THAN
WELCOME
TO JOIN
US,
KYLE!

THOUGH
WHAT PLEASURE
THERE IS TO BE
FOUND IN THIS
BATTLE IS
DUBIOUS, TO
SAY THE
LEAST!

EEYOOOWWW!
CUT IT OUT!

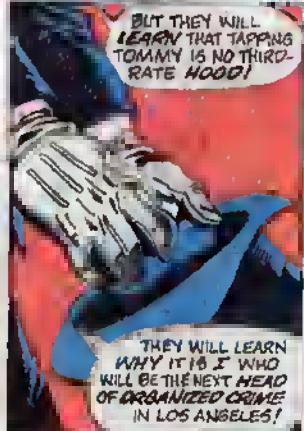
GOOD THING I
PACKED ALONG MY
COSTUME--

--THOUGH I DIDN'T
THINK I'D NEED IT FOR
WHAT WAS SUPPOSED
TO BE A BUSINESS TRIP!

JUST GOES
TO SHOW, I
GUESS, THAT YOU
NEVER CAN TELL
THESE DAYS
JUST WHERE THE
SLUGS'LL CRAWL
OUT OF THE
WOOD WORK!

RIGHT,
SLUGE!

WAH!
UNHHH!



KWHOOOM!

AND, SCANT SECONDS LATER...

THEY ARE DANE,
HODGES! DO YOU SEE?

AND I FEEL IN A PLAYFUL MOOD. TAKE OUR FRIENDS HERE TO THE MAIN SET--

WE FINISHED THEM, MY FRIEND! IT WAS YOUR LITTLE GAS-BOMBS THAT BROUGHT OUR FOEMEN DOWN! THE SAME ONES YOU DEIVED FOR THAT AWFUL GORILLA MOVIE BACK IN THE THIRTIES!

YEP,
YOU FINISHED 'EM, TOMMY!

YET--THEY DID DO THE JOB!



TIME IS PASSING LIKE THE SANDS IN AN HOURGLASS
... SLOWLY... UNTIL THE SANDS RUN OUT!

UNNNHHH...
ALIVE!

BUT
TO
WHAT?
AND
WHAT
OF THE
OTHERS?

ANSWER...

I SEEM
TO BE BOUND,
HOWEVER!

THEY'RE ALL IN THE SAME
BOAT, STEPHEN STRANGE!

AND IT'S SINKING
FAST!

AWAKE,
ARE YOU,
DOCTOR?

I'M GLAD! I WAS
BEGINNING TO FEEL
THAT YOU'D SLEEP
THRU THE WHOLE
SHOW!

WHICH WOULD NEVER,
EVER DO -- SEEING AS HOW
YOU AND YOUR INTERFERING
COMPANIONS ARE THE
STARS OF THIS LITTLE
PRODUCTION!

"WE'RE IN THE MONEY--"
"I KNOW WE'RE IN THE MONEY--"
"WE'VE GOT A LOT OF WHAT
IT TAKES TO GET ALONG!"

MARK THE WORDS
MY FACELESS LOVELIES
ARE SINGING, DOCTOR--

--FOR THEY ARE MY THEME! MY PURPOSE!

AND YOU HAVE ROBBED ME OF MY GOAL!

LIKE I SAID BEFORE, FELLA-

YOU'VE FLIPPED YOUR EVER LOVIN' GOURD!

AN INOPPORTUNE MOMENT TO CHOOSE TO TAUNT ME FRIEND



"START THE SHOW! NOW!"

GOOD LORD! THESE AUTOMATONS ARE TRYING TO BEAT US TO DEATH!

"YESSIR," AND AGAIN A BUTTON IS PRESSED...

AND THE BIARRE NUMBER BEGINS!

"WE'RE IN THE MONEY, I KNOW WE'RE IN THE MONEY--"

HOLD OUT AS BEST YOU CAN, NIGHTHAWK! THERE IS STILL HOPE!

AND AS LONG AS WE CAN'T FIGHT BLACK-- THEY JUST MIGHT SUCCEED!

ARRR! FINGERS ANNOY HULK--

THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE, DR STRANGE...

--TRY TO HURT HULK!

...BUT RAKING STEEL CLAWS TEAR AT THE CAPTIVE HULK...

...AND THE ALLOY THAT MAKES UP THE BEHEMOTH'S BONDS PROVE TOO MUCH FOR EVEN HIS GAMMA RAY-INDUCED STRENGTH.

HOPE FADES!

THE VALKYRIE FARES NO BETTER.

THESE METAL HARPIES ARE KILLING ME! BUT I'D BE HELPLESS AGAINST THEM EVEN IF UNFETTERED!

FORM POWERS ARE USELESS AGAINST WOMEN-- EVEN METAL ONES!

BUT NO ALLOY, NO MATTER HOW STRONG...

HULK IS FREE!

... CAN HOLD OUT FOR LONG
AGAINST THE RAGE OF THE
RAMPAGING HULK.

-- WE'VE GOT A
LOT OF WHAT IT
TAKES TO...
WHIRRERRRR

FREE TO SMASH!

SKRANG!

THE GREEN
ONE HAS
MANAGED
TO FREE
HIMSELF!

AND WHILE I
CANNOT
LASH OUT
AT ROBOT
TORMENTORS

-- I CAN
MAKE USE
OF MY
STRENGTH TO
SHAKE OFF MY
PETTERS!

AND THERE ARE
MALE ROBOTS ATTACKING
DOCTOR STRANGE!

I AM UNDER
NO SUCH BAN
AGAINST ATTACKING
THEM!

AND THE CHANCE
TO ACT IS ALMOST
-- REFRESHING!

SKRANG

I KNOW WE'RE
IN THE MONEY--
SKKTTTWHIRCLICK...

AUMLST!

HTAK!



AS FOR THE FLESH
AND-BLOOD PART OF
THIS ACT--

--HEADS UP,
BOYS! SHOW'S
JUST ABOUT
OVER!

COME BACK,
YOU FOOLS!

NO WAY! HOW'D
THIS TURN FROM A
SIMPLE KIDNAPPIN'
INTO A MASSACRE?

YOU'RE
SPOILING
EVERYTHING!

BUT I'VE STILL
MORE WHERE
THESE CAME FROM!
I'VE ALWAYS
GOT MORE!

HE'S TOTALLY
INSANE, AND
YET--

-HE KEEPS
LOOKING AT THE
MAN CALLED
HODGES! AT
THAT BOX WITH
ALL THE BUTTONS!

AND NEGLECTING
THE CAUSE!

NOT THE
MANIPULATOR!

SHE'S MY BEST
INVENTION!

WAS YOUR BEST INVENTION, MR. HODGES, WAS.

AND NO SOONER IS THE BOX DESTROYED THAN
THE MURDEROUS MANNEQUIN CEASE TO MOVE...

... AND DROPOUT WHERE
THEY STAND,

IT ... I KNOW WE'RE
IN THE MONEE--

BLAST
YOU!

LOON

YOU'VE FINISHED
ME! DESTROYED ALL
THAT I WORKED FOR
YEARS TO
CREATE!

BUT
YOU'LL NOT
GET ME!

